DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 538 CE 068 222

AUTHOR Wortham, Forest B.
TITLE Practice versus Theory When Planning Employee Training Programs.
PUB DATE Nov 94
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (Nashville, TN, November 2-5, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Comparative Analysis; *Corporate Education; Educational Planning; Educational Research; Models; Program Development; Teacher Attitudes; *Theory Practice Relationship; *Trainers; *Training Methods; Training Objectives
IDENTIFIERS Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh)

ABSTRACT

A study examined the program planning steps used by trainers on the job and the differences between the identified planning steps and the program planning models outlined in the adult education literature. Training managers from five corporations with headquarters in the Pittsburgh area were interviewed, and supporting documents about each training program were reviewed. The most consistent pattern identified across the case studies was use of a top-down management style from senior managers to managers of training. Needs analysis was used in only one program. The training managers did not suggest or reveal that they followed a specific theoretically based program model when planning programs; instead, they processed how they wanted to plan programs on a situation-by-situation basis in their minds. The training managers did not plan programs according to a preconceived theory because, in their words, doing so was neither efficient nor reflective of their corporation's needs or their personal needs. The study findings were interpreted as supporting the contention found in the literature that individuals plan programs in a situation-specific manner and as refuting the traditional adult education literature, which maintains that managers of training should use specific program planning steps and follow them in a lock-step pattern. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

F B Wortham

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Dr. Forest B. Wortham
Assistant Director Student Life
Penn State 135 Boucke. 865-2346

ED 380 538

PRACTICE VERSUS THEORY WHEN PLANNING EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Planning Programs by the Book or by the Job

Ask a thousand trainers in corporate America how they plan programs for employees and you will get just as many descriptions of program planning models. One has only to review the popular training journals and the adult education literature on program planning to see that there is an abundance of sure fire "cookbook" and theoretically based program planning models to choose from. Each model proclaims it is the answer to every adult educators program planning needs. Many models outline detailed steps for specific situations when planning a program. The Adult Education literature also underscores this premise in much of the theory based literature describing program planning steps. Knowles (1970), Houle (1977), and others outline program planning models that emphasize the use of specific planning steps at precise intervals each building upon the other. Researchers such as Pennington and Green (1976), Burnham (1988) and Cervero (1988) however, conclude that most program planners do not follow theoretically based textbook program planning models.

The variety of program planning models along with how the literature outlines programs should be planned is what led this writer to ask the questions: How do managers of Management Career Development departments in corporate America plan programs for employees on the job? What are the program planning steps used by trainers on the job and how are they different from what is outlined in the literature? The writer looked for the answer to those and other questions by interviewing managers of training in corporations

CE 068 222

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

who plan employee training programs as part of their job. Buskey and Sork (1986) analyzed the program planning literature and models over a period of time and developed a synthesized program planning model from the models reviewed. This model was used by the writer as the representative model of theoretically based program planning model.

Identifying and Interviewing Managers of Training on the Job

Participants in the study were identified from two sources, a study by Gutteridge and Otte (1983) and the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce. Gutteridge and Otte conducted a study for the American Society of Training and Development, where they surveyed corporate career development departments in the United States. The Pittsburgh Chamber of commerce provided a list of corporations with headquarters in the Pittsburgh area. After consolidating the two lists five, corporations were selected and the managers of training were identified for the interview.

Espoused Theory versus Theory in Use.

All of the individuals interviewed for the study were managers or vice presidents of training. Each was interviewed individually using counseling and in depth interviewing skills. The interviews were tape recorded after which they were transcribed and sent to the managers of training for review. While the managers of training reviewed the transcript, the author categorized and classified the data. The transcript, supporting documentation, and observations were analyzed, coded and assigned to categories as they occurred. This was accomplished by concentrating on changes in focus, content, time and place during the conversation. Once the data was classified, it was arranged in order of occurrence within the categories. Following identification of the coded categories they were analyzed to arrive at a

terminology that described the program planning steps.

Once the cases were analyzed and the program planning steps identified, the individual steps were cross referenced to identify duplicate steps. The final steps were those employed two or more times across cases. The result was a synthesized model that represented the program planning steps used by the managers of training in the study. The synthesized model from the study was then compared to Buskey and Sork's (1986) synthesized model of program planning steps.

Program Planning Steps Used on the Job

The author was able to identify the program planing steps of all the managers of training (see figure A). The managers of training used individual and organization specific terminology to describe their program planning steps. Once the trainer's planning steps were synthesized, *six program planning steps* (see figure B) were identified as a result of the study. This was three fewer steps than identified by Sork and Buskey (1986) in their synthesized planning model that had nine steps (see figure B). Three of the steps identified by the managers of training in the study were dissimilar to the Sork and Buskey (1986) model. Those steps were: *program origination, program support, and selecting the presenter*. All of the managers of training used specific language to describe program planning steps unique to their situation. In comparing the Sork and Buskey (1986) program planning steps to the steps identified from the study five out of the nine program planning steps were similar to five of the six steps found in the study (see figure B). The program planning steps used by the managers of training occurred in a identifiable and comprehensible pattern. The most consistent pattern identified across case studies was the use of top down management style

from senior management to the manager of training.

Needs analysis the most basic of the theoretically based program planning steps was absent in all but one of the cases. According to Knowles (1970) the starting point in program planning is always the adult's interests. According to this study the first need that was addressed was the need of senior management. Four of the managers of training did not use a needs analysis. The manager of training who used a needs analyses stated he had to justify training decisions to government agencies who provided funding.

The four managers of training who didn't use the needs analysis said they had neither the time, money, resources, or desire to conduct a needs analysis. Managers of training in this study focused their planning primarily on the requests of senior management and their approval. Demands of the institution were intertwined with senior managements' concerns and their perception of the corporation's needs.

Program Planning for the Future

The results of study found that:

1. The managers of training did not suggest or reveal that they followed a specific theoretically based program planning model when planning programs.

2. Managers of training processed how they wanted to plan the program on a situation by situation basis in their minds.

3. Managers of training did not plan programs according to a preconceived theory because according to them it was neither efficient nor reflective of the corporations needs or their or personal needs.

The results of this study supports the contention found in the literature that individuals plan

programs in a situation specific manner. In keeping with the research of Pennington and Green (1976) this study supported their contention that managers of training use similar steps across cases with the difference being use of terminology and occurrence of the program planning steps in the process. What is unique about this study in terms of the literature is that unlike what has been discussed in the literature. This study recognized the need for management support for programs and the origin of the programs.

The findings of this study have important implications for planning programs in corporate America, training corporate trainers and the program planning literature. From the author's perspective the following considerations should be reviewed:

- Program planning models from the literature should be used as templates when planning programs in corporate America.
- Steps found in the synthesized program planning models from the program planning literature should be used when and where as needed.

-Define a successful program according to the individual criteria of the manager of training and the corporations they work in.

-The traditional adult education literature by theorist would do well to recognize that individuals who plan programs on the job in corporate settings have an obligation to senior management and the corporation first.

-Recognize that senior level executives are usually the individuals who decide which programs are to be conducted.

-Encourage manager of training prior to planning a program to identify the individuals the program will affect and involve them in the planning process.

-Manager of training should align themselves with the people who have power and influence early in the planning process to ensure they obtain the necessary support for their programs.

-Designers of program planning models from the adult education perspective and practitioners on the job would do well to integrate what they are doing. A joint venture to develop a model with steps that representative of what is occurring on the job and what is outlined in the literature would serve the manager of training in the future.

Discussion

The significance of this study is that it supports the researchers' contention that a broader perspective to program planning is needed. In summary this study did not support the traditional Adult Education literature which maintains that managers of training should use specific program planning steps and follow them in a lock step pattern. Instead the study followed and supported the literature that points to managers of training, planning programs according to the corporations and their needs.

INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY PROGRAM PLANNING STEPS

Figure A

CASE STUDY A

1. Program origin from executive management.
2. Obtaining program support
3. Establish program focus
4. Instructional design
5. Employee involvement
6. Program evaluation

CASE STUDY B

1. Program origin from executive management
2. Getting program support
3. Establish program focus
4. Instructional design
5. Selecting presenters
6. Presenter objectives
7. Program evaluation

CASE STUDY C

1. Program origin from executive management
2. Gathering program support
3. Establish program focus
4. Instructional design
5. Developing the focus
6. Selecting the presenters
7. Program evaluation

CASE STUDY D

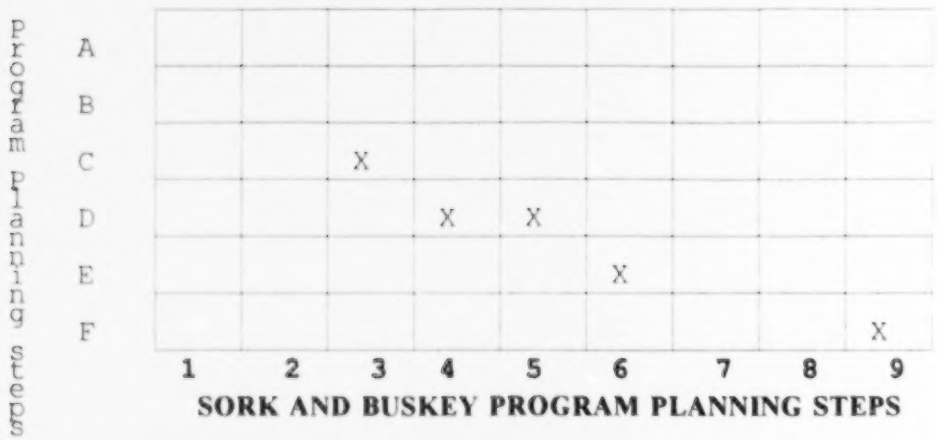
1. Program origin from executive management
2. Getting support for the program
3. Develop idea for the program
4. Assessing finances
5. Instructional design
6. Time management
7. Advertising
8. Program evaluation

CASE STUDY E

1. Needs analysis
2. Management support
3. Instructional design
4. Developing content and objectives
5. Program evaluation

COMPARISON OF CASE STUDY RESEARCH AND SORK AND BUSKEY PROGRAM PLANNING MODELS

Figure B



SYNTHESIZED PROGRAM PLANNING STEPS FROM CASE STUDIES

A. Program origin from executive management
B. Program support from management
C. Establishing program focus
D. Instructional design
E. Selection of presenters
F. Design of evaluation

SORK AND BUSKEY (1986) SYNTHESIZED MODEL OF PROGRAM PLANNING STEPS

1. Analysis of planning context and client systems to be served
2. Assessment of learner needs.
3. Development of objectives.
4. Selection and ordering of content.
5. Selection design and ordering of instructional content.
6. Selection of instructional resources.
7. Formulation of budget and administrative plan.
8. Assurance of participation (marketing, promotion, and or notification of participants).
9. Design of evaluation procedure.

References

Argyris, C. & Schon, D.A.(1974). Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Cervero, R.M.(1988). Effective continuing education for professionals. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Elias, J.L. and Merriam, S.(1980). Philosophical foundations of adult education. Malabar, Fl: Krieger.

Gutteridge, T.G. and Otte, F.L. (1983). Organizational career development systems: State of practice. Washington, D.C.: American Society for Training and Development.

Houle, C.O. (1977). Designing education. Washington, D.C.: Jossey Bass.

Knowles, M.S. (1970). Modern practice of adult education. New York, NY: Association Press.

Pennington, F.C. and Green, J. (1976). Comparative analysis of program development process in six professions. Adult Education, XXVII, 1, 13-23.

Sork, T. H. and Buskey, J. H. (1986). Descriptive and evaluative analysis of program planning literature 1950-1983. Adult Education Quarterly, 36(2), 86-96.

Worham, F.B. (1992). An examination of program planning in management career development program in corporations: The theory-practice dimension. Doctoral dissertation, Penn State University, Pennsylvania.